

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
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AMERICAN FOLKLIFE PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**INFORMANT: SERGEANT KUCH AND VANN PEN [CAMBODIA]
CONDUCTED BY: MICHAEL BELL & DOUG DENATALE
DATE: DECEMBER 21, 1987**

**K = KUCH
V = VANN
B = BELL
D = DOUG**

LFP MB-R015

There is no introduction. Children can be heard in background throughout the interview. Tape begins with Mr. Kuch speaking in Cambodian, explaining wedding slides to the two interviewers. Slides were taken as part of the Folklife Project.

K: You start the tape now?

B: Okay, yeah.

K: Start it?

B: Umhm. This is before the ceremony starts? You were just posing for pictures?

K: Ah, this one [children crying in background] been after the cele, the cele, ceremony start.
(B: Umhm) And the both parent, (B: Umhm) groom and bride's sit down to light the symbol of the groom and brides. (B: Oh, okay) What they should doing next.

B: Okay. That's your mother, Hing's mother too? And is that Sopeep's mother?

K: Yes.

V: [Unclear].

B: Yeah, Mrs. Chu? (V: Chung) Chung? That's Sopeep's mother. Okay.

K: This one's is after the both parent, groom and bride left and then the grandmother of Hing [unclear], Hing parents coming in to sit.

B: Oh, that's your grandmother?

K: To be, you know, like a sample to stand for the both groom and bride should be to doing next. This one how they set up. The both grandmother, groom and bride's, plus the both on the side. Like (--)

B: Okay. This is both grandmothers in front?

K: In the front, and on the sides like they family related to the groom and the bride. This one's all guests, you know, related to the family they sit down. And then they wait and see what happen with the, what they're doing and you know, they celebrate in ceremony.

B: Do the brides family sit on one side and the groom on the other, or does it matter? Just(--)

K: It doesn't matter. All mixed up together.

B: You know, at American weddings it's one side one, one side the other.

K: This one they choose it's the both, each one the brother. Brother one side, and the other brother on you know, groom's side to stand for like you know, ah, symbol for what they should be doing (B: oh okay) in the ceremony.

B: Same.

K: It is the same. (B: The two Monks) Ah, this ceremony they used to do like one day before the wedding. The big you know, ceremonies start. They, the both parent they all, you know all wearing white. The Monk come to wish to share the bless to groom and brides, and to give them you know like, to share the bless. And there should be something great for both of them. Something like happiness and joys.

B: Oh, okay.

D: So they're blessing the house and the couple?

K: Yes, and the house, couple.

D: And they do this before the cer, before the wedding?

K: This always doing before the ah, the big ceremony start. (B: Okay) Sometime a day before. Sometime they doing like (B: in the morning) a little bit early in the morning.

B: That's what they did that day I think. They came the same day.

K: Oh this one probably they did ah, early in the morning.

B: Yeah, umhm.

K: And this one they start (--)

B: So they say a chant?

K: Spraying.

B: The Monks? A certain, they have certain chants they do?

K: Ah, like on [unclear] the Monk, I don't know what, exactly what happened, but usually like ah, the priests they ah, you know pray to, to real, to the God, the man, you know, the man God. And then after that the Monks started what they praying to the other, the rest of people, plus the groom and brides. And to be you know to shareful.

B: This is still part of that.

K: [Comment unclear] The other people pray to God.

B: [Comment unclear] They're, they were like Nuns. The women from the Temple.

K: Ah, it's not really. The Nun in the Temple they wearing particularly all white and they shave off hair, doing like the Monk do.

B: Umhm.

K: But this one like the people when they get older they have a two [part]. What they call that? You know like Sis, they call, and I really don't know. (B: unclear) No. Like eight and tens. The ten is like you know, you have to do it like the Monk do.

B: Oh.

K: You eat and then you, you know, stay in the Temple. And then you can't do any particularly what you want to do. And the respect to (--)

B: To follow the rules of the Monks.

K: Right, follow the rules of the Monk. And the people can come home and then stay home doing like simple what we do, and then back to Temple when the day that they want to, you know the day that they pray. That's second [unclear].

B: But women can't be Monks?

K: They can't be the same like Monk, but they have like what I say before, at the weddings, you know, all white. And then share like [unclear].

B: So they don't wear the saffron color, yellow.

K: No it's not, all white.

B: Same ceremony?

K: After the other people they, after they pray, Monks give the blessing to them. This one, ah, almost says, the prayer almost saying that and how's they you know, you look on the picture. The one that the couple in the front of wedding, they [unclear] all white. It mean that they you know, almost equal to the Monk. That's what they respect to the Law of God.

B: And they have a candle lit in the front.

K: Yes, the candle stands for you know, [children crying in background] the life of [unclear]. Sometimes, when they lean down a little bit, mean that the man stand on a chair with the water, threw all over everybody to mean that they give, you know, the blessing.

B: With the water?

K: Yes, water.

B: Does he throw it out?

K: Throw it out.

B: But the candle has been in the water?

K: Yes, it drop into the water. And most of the time the water that they share first, they save it to give it to everyone that need it, you know, to keep. Share to the other people that staying home or (--)

B: And the water is blessed?

K: Yes, that's stay some in half of [unclear]

B: Oh okay. The water's in that bowl?

K: Yes, into the bowl.

B: Into the bowl. This here?

K: Yes, it is that one.

[There is a long pause. Then there is conversation that cannot be understood. They are going through the slides.]

B: Now, this is after the blessing.

K: After the blessing and then, [Women speaking Cambodian in background]

B: This is actually part of the wedding?

K: They choose the one that is the oldest brother with husband and wife to sit down there to carry the, you know, like um, give the palm, flower ?

B: Oh.

K: Palm tree flower.

B: Is that what that is?

K: Yes, that is the one that's here.

B: Right. (K: That one) That's from the Palm Tree?

K: Yes, it's from the Palm Tree.

B: Does that, is that symbolize something?

K: It symbolize for, to something for share. You know, share to everyone.

B: Oh, sharing.

K: For happiness.

B: So one, it's the brother, the oldest man in the family.

K: They choose the one that is the, that married, have ah, husband and wife. (B: was already married) I mean it stand for when the next generation, after the next one get married. They you know stay, they stick with husband and wife forever. Don't separated. Don't you know, divorce or something. That's why they pick up the one, that the older one that have a good couple, to sit there to stand for the next one.

D: So it was Vann and his wife.

K: Yes, Vann and his wife.

B: And there are two candles too, is that(--)

K: Two candle stand for um, like couple.

B: Oh, okay. And then there are other (--)

K: Everything have to be a couple.

B: Offerings of gifts, the other gifts like fruit?

K: Ah, they have, they have two gifts. One gift for the, likes clothes on one side. And then clothes for one wife except for the groom and bride.

B: Okay. So people bring gifts for each one?

K: It's the parent,s (B: Oh, the parent's do) both the parent give the gift when they get married to mean that they gonna be you know, separated from the family. And then they, after they get married they go away as husband and wife. And then the parent gives the gift to them to you know, keep it. What they share in that time.

B: Okay. Woops, I went the wrong way. These are just the wives of the musicians, I think.

K: Yes, that is.

B: They're from Providence? The musicians?

K: This house it look like the groom ah, I don't see the bride in there.

B: Maybe in the back.

K: They, you know, oh, that one the bride.

B: No.

K: Is not the bride, the groom that one, right? (B: Umhm) This one is the time that ah, they cut the flower, the Palm Tree flower, and to show to everybody that the flower had to be cutted.

B: Now who cuts it, Vann

K: Vann and his wife.

B: Oh, O.K. They both cut it.

K: You can see in the picture, this, you know.

B: They use a knife?

K: Yes, knife, or either one, the long sword that they put in there to cut it. This is the same as before, they cutting. Should, you should put this one first before you know, they (--)

B: This one?

K: Before, first before they cut it.

B: This one. It goes before (K: That one) that one.

K: Yes, and then that one cut it.

B: Oh, it's already cut?

K: No, not yet.

B: Not yet.

K: Yeah.

B: Okay.

K: And after that they give the fruit too Vann to ah, peel and (--)

B: Oh, he'll (K: yeah), he'll peel a banana?

K: To peel a banana and then to show you know, the symbol of the groom and bride should do in the next generation.

B: Now does someone special hand that to him, or just (--)

K: Ah, it's the, like he's the priest.

B: Oh, so he's officiating the ceremony.

K: Yes, he's the one officiating the [child is crying in background] ceremony.

B: Right. Ah, see he's giving him a banana. I think they're just watching.

K: Yes, for, this is the thing for like they usually invite the older people to ah, sit down and give you know, to be witness, when it mean that they, they both waiting to know.

B: He's like the priest, or the official.

K: Yeah, to doing ah, official for ah the whole ceremony.

B: Now he's got two plates of two (--)

K: Ah, that ones everything in it. I mean from the old time in the King. They do, they put ah, like some you know, the old stuff from the old time. Old day, they keep it for everybody. And

for like for Grandmom ah, the Grandfather that they used to eat when he get old. And they keeping that stuff and when everyone getting married and then had to be, lift that one up, and then give to the parent or the grandparent, that the oldest one, for ah, you know, keeping the old day.

B: So these little dishes are, belong to the grandparents. They're old.

K: Ah ha, it's like, it's the property, you know, it's not of real property, but kind of ah, what I say? I say like (--)

B: Symbolic?

K: I'm not sure what you know, they call it.

B: Is there food inside?

K: No, it's not. It's all the stuff from old day like, ah, I don't know how to call a name is. It's kind of just in South East Asian.

B: What would you call it in Cambodian, in Khmer?

K: Ah, [Sounds like: Slah, Manou, Hinan, & several other names that cannot be transcribed?] This one is how they set up for ah, grooms and brides before they come into ah, Cambodian they call um, [cannot transcribe Cambodian word], lay down and before [unclear] the relationship. The groom and bride to give them the share with the straw, the flower, Palm flower. This is the way they set up.

B: Okay.

K: Have one pot of water, and have two candle. Had to be have two candle.

B: Right one for [rest of comment unclear].

K: For groom one for bride, stand for couple.

B: Right.

K: Had to be two. This picture show ah, the brother, father, groom, and on the right side next to the groom the lady is his wife, or the guy on the right. And the last [unclear] relationship to, is his brother.

B: More relations? Now it's all set up?

K: Yes. Everything, when they always set up like that.

B: They're playing music.

K: The music is carried from the old days. They make it by this, some have two strings, like the one guy ah, on the right side. And

B: With the bow?

K: Yeah, with the bow. And, the one that, with the ah, they call that Chic kay, that one have two strings too. (B: Which is Chic kay?) The next one to (--)

B: Is this Chic kay?

K: No, it's the other one.

B: This one?

K: Yes, that one. (B: This one?) chic kay. And the other one is [speaks Cambodian, sounds like Ponya]. The first time they call it [sounds like: Trow]. Have two string to.

B: Trow?

K: Yeah, Trow. And the drum, small drum on the guy on the left side. That one. And the singer on the middle wearing red long hair.

B: This is a drum?

K: Yes, a small drum.

B: What? Do you know the name?

K: Ah, it's called [sounds like: Skol].

B: Skol?

K: Yes, Cambodian. (B: Okay) This is couple stand up.

B: This is before they sit down in the (--)

K: After, I really don't know. Probably after (--)

B: Oh, after. They play music (--)

K: It's the wedding music.

B: Oh, before the ceremony too, and during?

K: Ah, this music, they, before the ceremony and on the middle of ceremony when someone you

know, do dance around it and then probably show, and then next film that they acting. (B: Yes. Right) Acting on the floor, lie down.

B: But he's playing?

K: Ah, that one, the guy wearing the white shirt, (B: Yeah) have two stick on. They playing, they call that um, [sounds like Chic kay]. (B: Chic-Kay) Chic-Kay. And the guy wearing glasses play [sounds like trow, trow] Yes.

B: We call that a, a Dulcimer.

K: Chic-kay, with two stick on.

B: Europeans call it Hammer Dulcimer. (K: I guess) It's very similar. It's a folk instrument.

K: Umhm. This one this guy's playing, ah, this one I call it Chic-kay, have two string.

B: Umhm. Yup.

K: The same. See if you compare to the, the instrument music ah, they call it modern music right now, like a base.

B: Oh, okay.

K: And the guys play over there have a two stick on, like a solo.

B: Melody.

K: Yes.

B: Right.

B: And the guys there with the ah, what you call the?

B: The bow?

K: Yes, the bow, and then like (--)

B: It looks like, like a violin, a fiddle.

K: Yes. It's a little bit like piano. This one house is couple to holding the sword.

B: The sword?

K: To stand for you know, it's when the old days. The king when he get married, and then they hold the sword, saying that both have to, only one part of body right now when they get married.

It mean that holding one sword to, to be symbolized for, for couple.

B: What about those in the front with the flower on top wrapped with string?

K: That stand for you know the flower after, the Palm Flower after they cut it.

B: Oh!

K: Divide it, they make it three. One for the parent, groom parent, one for the bride parent, and the other one for who is the older brother, or both of.

B: The oldest brother.

K: Yes, both of couple. Have three on that.

B: What's on each side?

K: Ah, each side it's like, I think that's the flower. It just stand for old couple, that's all. This one that they give it to the bride parents, and then they untie the string to get the Palm Flower out (B: Oh!) before they sharing to the other people.

B: That's the (--)

K: It's hows they, after they untie it, hows look like.

B: That's the Palm Flower.

K: Yes, Palm Flower.

B: And that's what they cut before?

K: Yeah, that was cut before. And this one is still the same, is like the one before.

B: Right, for one left.

K: Okay, this ones is when the old day, when the kings getting married. And then we, you know they carry from old time. Ah, they dance to show to the other people when they get married, the next generation to the next generation to now, and hows they acted to show hows the ceremony ah, what happened. By the dancing to you know, to show the sword and with the other size the one that put on the sword. And they dance and they acting to show you know how they, the groom and brides have to be share with each other when, after they get married what looks like, and they acting in the ceremony.

B: So he's act, telling them by acting out how they should behave?

K: Both [unclear], when after you take it out have two, stand for both.

B: Both.

K: When you put it in, in the sword or include into one. Have like, stand for don't have two idea. Two against each other after you get married. Have to be one idea as you know. Doing one things altogether. This is how they acting. Sometime they dance and did the same thing the same time.

B: Umhm. So he might be singing right now?

K: Yes. The same thing, and acting. And after that they have [unclear-children crying in background]. And then everything right now is you know, going to only one. Probably this thing for the thing that for groom and bride for you know, to groom have to be, feel it out. After they, after done the ceremony, they go into their own room to give to the husband share.

B: That's where they go now?

K: Right.

B: She goes

K: This one after they finish the ceremony. They go into their own room. Her how its look like. The thing that they give it into one pot. All fruit banana, orange, grape.

D: Sometimes a egg, an egg?

K: Ah, what you mean that?

D: Ah, hard boiled egg.

K: Yes, sometimes that. Especially they give banana first, and sometime grapefruit. (D: right) And then after that they give a cigarette too, cigarette after the final. (D: Umhm) It mean that it usually the old day ah, the groom and bride they didn't go out and then have a date at first.

B: Oh, I see.

K: They all, you know, they see each other and then they fall in love. And they go and tell their parent go to the, you know, the other parent ask for wedding. And they do this to stand for [unclear] both couple to shine. It's [unclear-children in background] and then like you know to share what love.

B: She feeds him and then he (--)

K: And he feed to her only one banana. The same banana. After that they lay down you know, and stay for when the old day, the king and friends, hows it look like. [They are going through the slides]. [Unclear] made them to shine for you know both couple that have got married. They

want them go along good in front of everybody now, when they you know, the night for, uh honeymoon night.

B: Umhm. Right.

K: And this one they acting hows, and I really don't know exactly, but probably, you know.

B: She's singing, or telling a story?

K: She's singing part the story. And the guy be acting like the groom and the bride should do, and then something like that. Even if ah (--)

B: And this is after they've been in the room. They come back?

K: Yes, they come back. Like you know they give a little show. And then, and when if the guy ah, lay down he's sick, or what he was, you know, the wife have to be take care of him.

B: Right, okay.

K: Right, even if the you know the wife lay down sick and right. The husband have to take care of him, right. I mean to show for both couple to know what (B: help each other) [few words unclear] should do.

B: And they give them ah, [unclear].

K: Ah, this one they carry the, what they call?

B: The rug.

K: Yes, the rug.

B: As a gift.

K: And the something, probably a pillow on it. You know to, something for you to sleep after the acting. And then right now it's the groom and bride have to be act like that. The say what he do.

B: Now who gives them the rug?

K: Ah, the priest. The one in charge.

D: This is afterwards.

K: After the ceremony. And there's you know the relationship related to the groom and bride they share each other with the picture. To keep a memory in the album ah, send it to friends living far away. Or to keep it for their children when they

TAPE COMES TO END